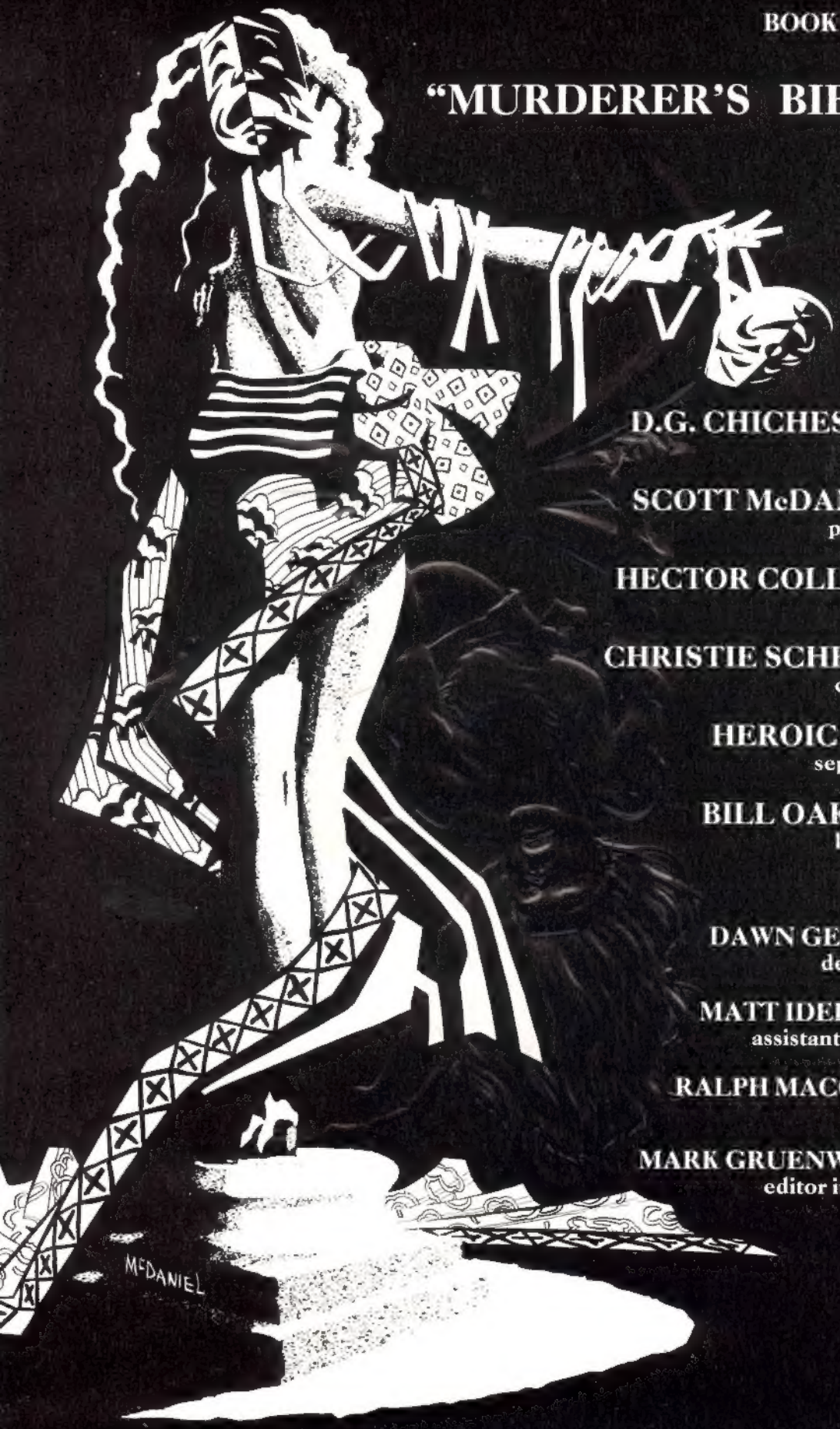
BOOK TWO

"MURDERER'S BIBLE"



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ELEKTRA

ROOT OF EVIL

TWO

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I WANT YOU

the brotherhood

NEAREST RECRUITING STATIONS

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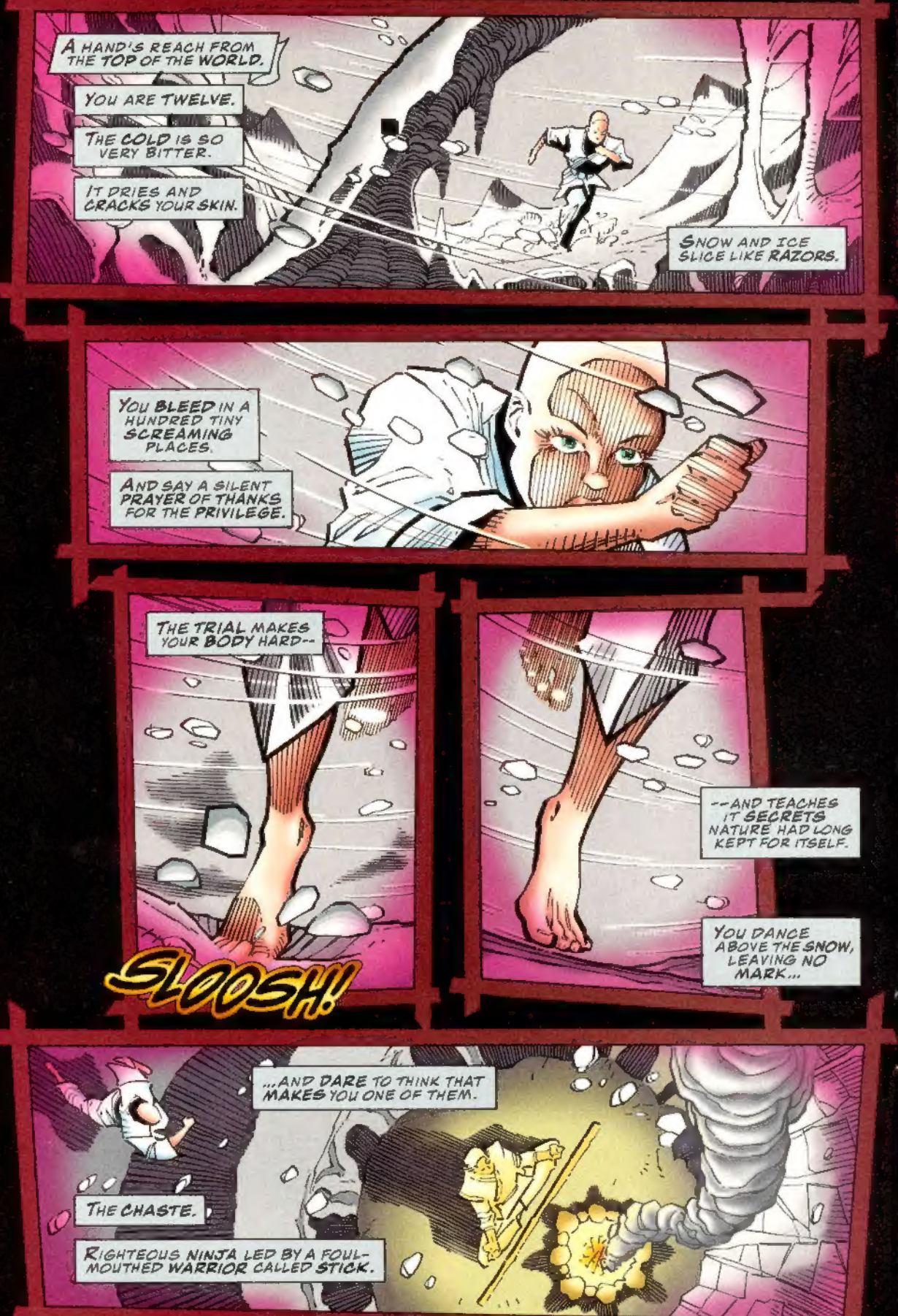
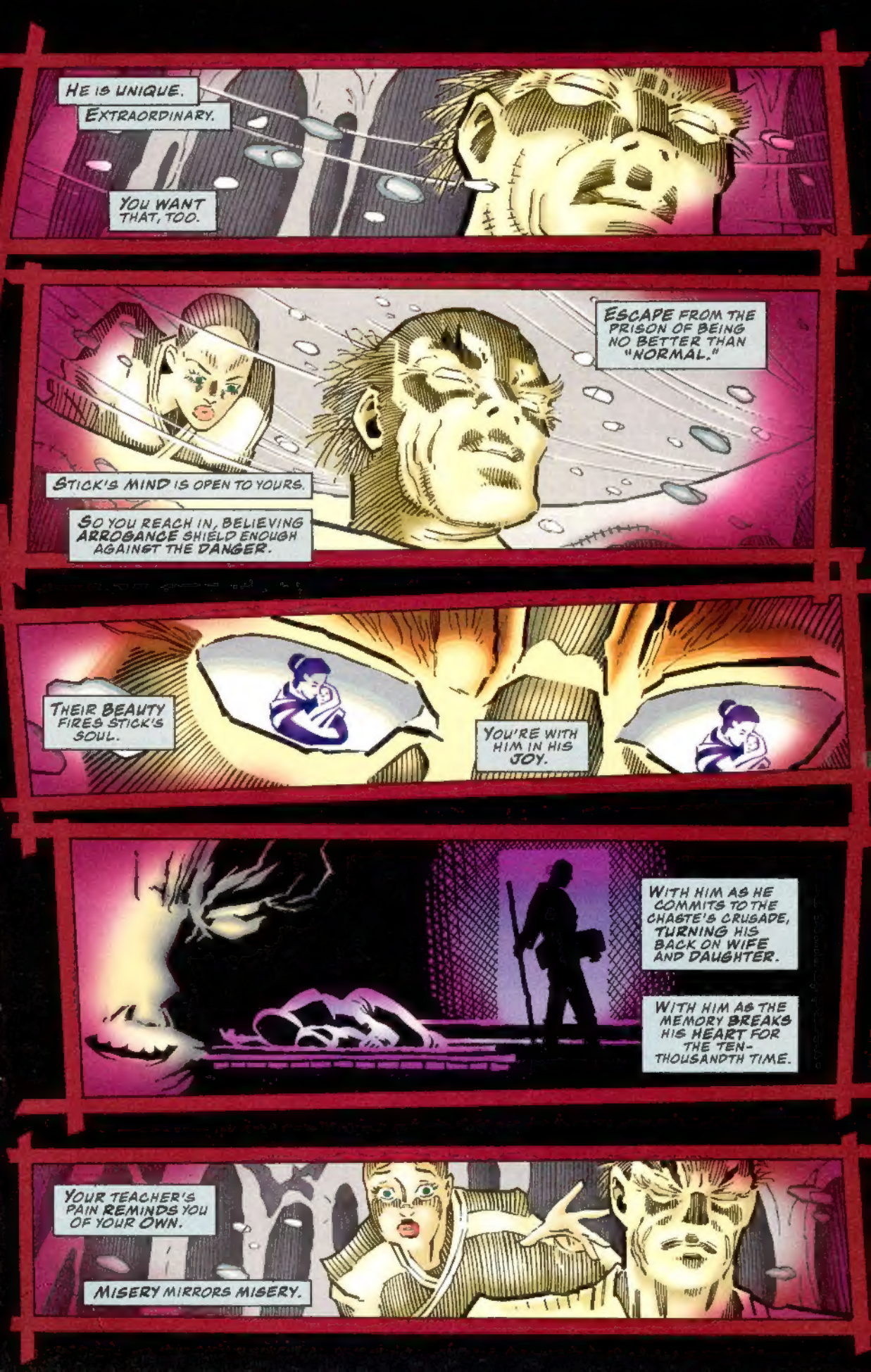
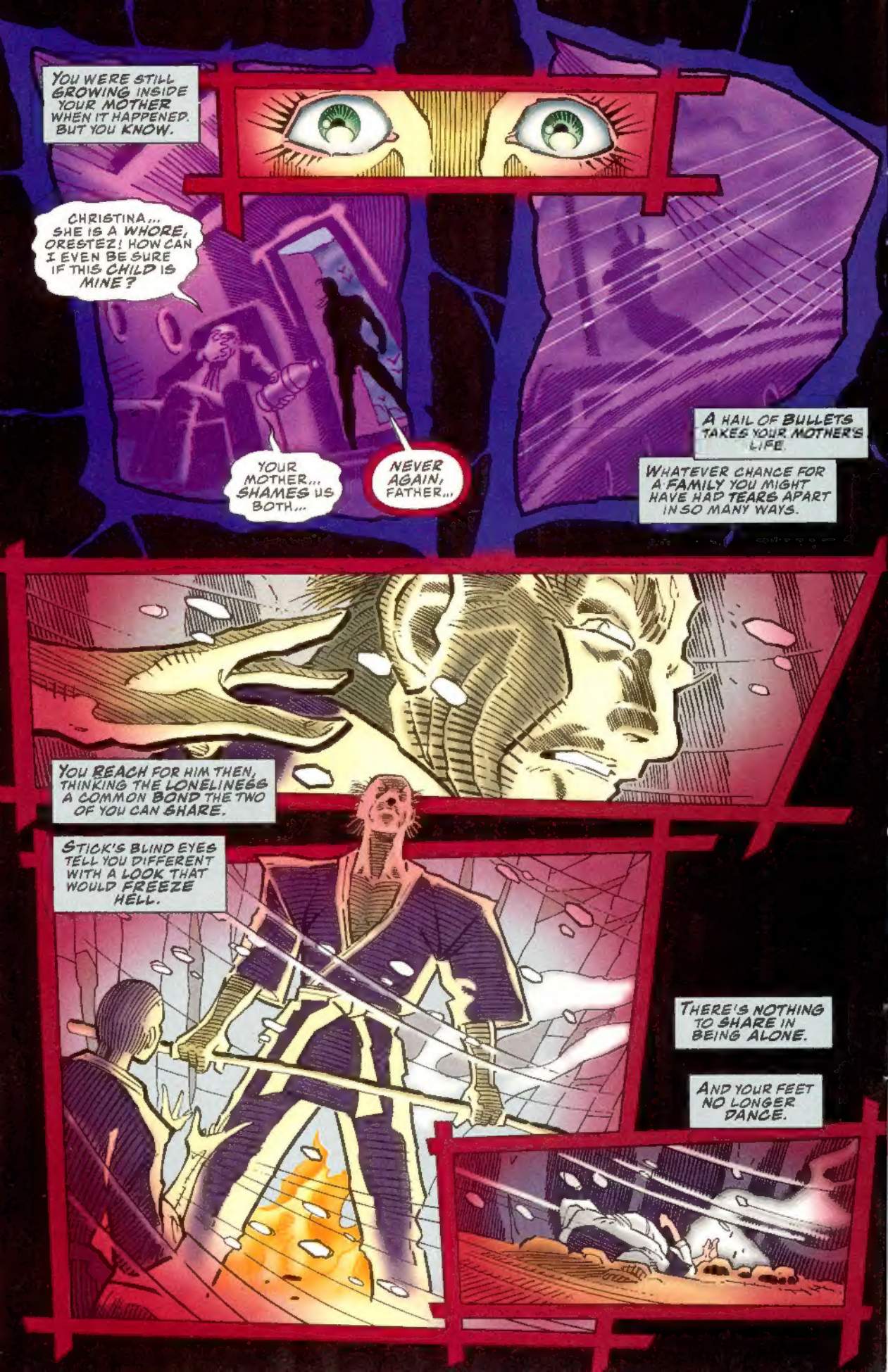
"It hath often been said that it is not death, but dying, which is terrible."
Henry Fielding, 1745


A HAND'S REACH FROM THE TOP OF THE WORLD.
YOU ARE TWELVE.
THE COLD IS SO VERY BITTER.
IT DRIES AND CRACKS YOUR SKIN.
SNOW AND ICE SLICE LIKE RAZORS.
YOU BLEED IN A HUNDRED TINY SCREAMING PLACES.
AND SAY A SILENT PRAYER OF THANKS FOR THE PRIVILEGE.
THE TRIAL MAKES YOUR BODY HARD--
SLOOSH!
--AND TEACHES IT SECRETS NATURE HAD LONG KEPT FOR ITSELF.
YOU DANCE ABOVE THE SNOW, LEAVING NO MARK...
...AND DARE TO THINK THAT MAKES YOU ONE OF THEM.
THE CHASTE.
RIGHTEOUS NINJA LED BY A FOUL-MOUTHED WARRIOR CALLED STICK.


He is unique.
Extraordinary.
You want that, too.
Escape from the prison of being no better than "normal."
Stick's mind is open to yours.
So you reach in, believing arrogance shield enough against the danger.
Their beauty fires Stick's soul.
You're with him in his joy.
With him as he commits to the chaste's crusade, turning his back on wife and daughter.
With him as the memory breaks his heart for the ten-thousandth time.
Your teacher's pain reminds you of your own.
Misery mirrors misery.


You were still growing inside your mother when it happened. But you know.
Christina... she is a whore, Orestez! How can I even be sure if this child is mine?
Your mother... shames us both...
Never again, father...
A hail of bullets takes your mother's life.
Whatever chance for a family you might have had tears apart in so many ways.
You reach for him then, thinking the loneliness a common bond the two of you can share.
Stick's blind eyes tell you different with a look that would freeze hell.
There's nothing to share in being alone.
And your feet no longer dance.

TONIGHT.
OUTSIDE KINBRAE, SCOTLAND.
EVERETT SALVO GOT THE WORD VIA A GLASGOW ARMORER--
--WHO'D HEARD IT THROUGH A BOMB-MAKER IN VEGAS--
--WHO'D BEEN TOLD BY A TERRORIST VACATIONING IN MOROCCO.
A NEW RYU WAS COMING TOGETHER.
A NINJA ORDER ASSEMBLED AND LED BY A MERCENARY CALLING HERSELF ELEKTRA.
HIS OWN LINE OF DIRTY WORK MEANT SALVO HAD COME ACROSS THE NAME BEFORE.
A MASTER ASSASSIN. AND SAID TO BE LONG IN THE GRAVE.
BUT IT'S NO GHOST HE'S BEEN STALKING THE LENGTH OF THE WEST HIGHLANDS.
NO PHANTOM THAT LEAVES ONLY A SINGLE HAIR IN 27 HOURS OF HUNT.
NOT MUCH FARTHER NOW...

MAYBE A SHADOW, THOUGH.
SLIPPING LOOSE FROM THE REST, AND COLD WITH THE TOUCH OF DEATH.
...AND THEN YOU'RE MINE!

IT FEELS SOOO GOOD TO BE WANTED!
DON'T MAKE TOO MUCH--OF YOUR APPEAL!
SLTHHT
ZAAK
TROUBLE KEEPING YOUR BALANCE?
HOW NICE...

TETSUBISHI.
RAZOR-SHARP, POISON-TIPPED
NUKI-ASHI STEPS
STAYING JUST AHEAD OF THE LETHAL CLATTER.
VERY NICE...
GLAD YOU APPROVE.
SALVO IS "NO KAJUTSU," FROM THE SCHOOL OF FIRE AND EXPLOSIVE.
THE MAN AND HIS WEAPONS ARE INTERCHANGEABLE.
EITHER ONE CAN BLOW YOU TO KINGDOM COME.
LET'S MAKE THIS QUICK--

--URRK!
WHERE'S THE THRILL IN THAT?
MY TURN!
KLIIK
YOU PULLED THE AMMO. VERY... SUBTLE!
WHAT CAN I SAY? I M JUST AN UNDERHANDED S.O.B.!
EXACTLY WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR
WELCOME TO THE TEAM, SALVO...

ST. GEORGE, UTAH
DEVLIN MEMORIA
SHELTER
"HOMELESS IS NOT HELPL
GOD HELPS THEM HELPS THEM-SELVES! THAT IT, FATHER?
FATHER PETER NOVA
~DIRECTOR~
A new beginning for Christ
SHRK
GOD HELP YOUR COLLAR-WEARIN' BUTT, YOU GET IN MY FACE!
CLEAN UP, HE PREACHES! WHAT FOR? IT AIN'T SO BAD HERE!
YOU'RE SO RIGHT, JED--AN' SO RIGHT FOR ME! LET'S GO SOMEWHERE, Hmmm? --LEMME SHOW YOU WHAT I MEAN!
MOM? MOM, IT'S STORY TIME!
MOM, YOU PROMISED TO TAKE ME TO STORY TIME WITH THE NUNS AND--
QUIET NOW, MAXY!

YOUR MOUTHY KID WOULDN'T KNOW QUIET IF IT BIT HIM, DAISY!
WE GOT IT GOOD HERE, Y'KNOW! RUNNIN' RACKETS, ROLLIN' LOSERS... THIS HOLY SPIRIT PRIEST'S GONNA RUIN ALL THAT!
I'LL MAKE IT RIGHT FOR YOU, BABY! MAKE YOU FORGET ALL THAT GRIEF...FIFTEEN MINUTES AT A TIME...
MOM! STORYTIME'S GONNA START SOON AND--
I MEAN, LIKE IT MATTERS WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS WASTE!
SHUT UP, MAX! CAN'T YOU SEE ME AN' JED ARE TALKIN'?
KIDS TODAY GOT NO RESPECT!
TAKE ME SOMEPLACE JUST YOU AND ME, JED...TAKE DAISY FOR A RIDE ON THAT HARLEY O' LOVE!
YOU PROMISED...
BOY...YOUR MOMMA EVER TELL YOU NOT TO TALK TO STRANGERS?
N-NO.
AND SHE SEEMS SUCH A CONSCIENTIOUS PARENT.
WELL, MY NAME IS TEKAGI, MAX. NOW WE'RE NOT STRANGERS.
WHAT--WHAT DID YOU WANNA TALK 'BOUT?

BRING ME THAT FLYER THERE...AND I'LL TRADE IT FOR A STORY.
LIKE THE NUNS TELL?
I DOUBT IT.
MY STORY IS ABOUT THIS BLADE. SAKKI--THE FORCE OF THE KILLER!
AWESOME! WHERE'D--WHERE DO YOU GET SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT?
YOU PLAN, BOY--PLAN AND HOPE AND DREAM. AND STAND READY TO MAKE ANY SACRIFICE!
I'VE TOLD THE TALE MANY TIMES BEFORE...
I'M TALKING ABOUT AMBITION, ELEKTRA!
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE SNAKEROOT! BEING IN THE HAND MAKES US KILLERS FOR HIRE, TEKAGI...
...THE SNAKEROOT ARE SOMETHING WORSE!
THEY ARE THE WORLD'S MOST FEROCIOUS SHADOW WARRIORS!
AND SAKKI IS THEIR SYMBOL! AS LONG AS ITS STEEL IS STRONG, THE SNAKEROOT ARE UNSTOPPABLE!
YOU DO MAKE IT SOUND ALMOST... APPEALING!

"AND NOW I TELL THE TALE TO YOU, YOUNG MAX...
"934 YEARS AFTER THE BIRTH OF CHRIST, THERE WAS A MONK NAMED TOMONORI.
"IT'S HARD TO SAY WHAT WAS MORE LEGENDARY--HIS COMPASSION, OR HIS SKILL WITH FIRE AND STEEL.
"TOMONORI FOUND A WAY TO ENTRAP MAN'S BRUTAL NATURE...
"...AND FOLDED IT INTO THE GREAT SWORD HE WAS FORGING.
"HE THOUGHT TO KEEP THE FURY LOCKED AWAY FOREVER. BUT IT GROWLED AND SHRIEKED FROM WITHIN THE BLADE.
"THE BLOOD OF THE INNOCENT--THEIR KI, THEIR LIFE FORCE--WAS SAKKI'S DESIRE.
"ITS HUNGER TORE AT THE METAL, ROTTING IT THROUGH... UNTIL THE SNAKEROOT CLAN OF NINJA FOUND A WAY TO FEED IT.
"AND MADE THEIR PRECIOUS STEEL--THEIR FEARSOME ICON--LIKE NEW ONCE MORE."
NINJA? LIKE THE TURTLES?
NOT QUITE.
ALTHOUGH THEY DO ENJOY A SLICE OF PIZZA, ON OCCASION.
SAKKI...ITS METAL'S ALL RUSTY IN PLACES. THE STORY...IT DON'T END HAPPY, DOES IT?
NO. NOT FOR SOME.

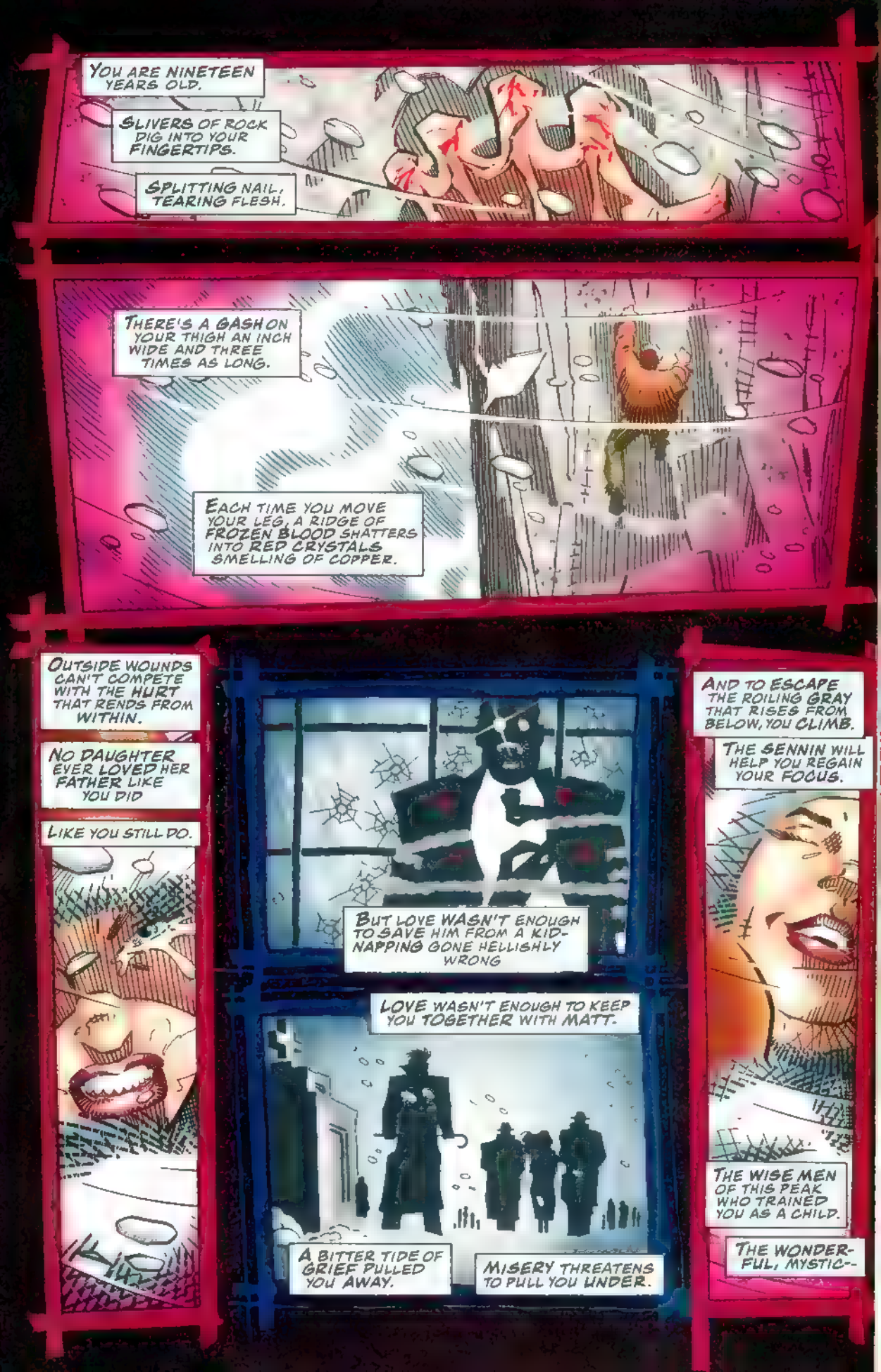
MOM! MOM, YOU GOTTA HEAR THIS STORY TEKAGI TOLD ME!
ALL 'BOUT NINJAS AND THIS MONK WITH THESE POWERS--
Y'KNOW WHY ALL THE GUYS CALL YOU "DAISY", BABY?
'CAUSE ANYONE CAN PICK YOU UP! HEE-HA!
--AND THIS KILLER SWORD AND--
ULLFK
HEE-HEE! OH, JED-- YOU ARE SUCH A TEASE!
YOUR BRAT'S GOT DIARRHEA OF THE MOUTH AGAIN, DAZE!
WE CAN'T ALL BE CHARMERS LIKE YOU, JED...
SO WHERE'S THIS-- WHAT'S HIS NAME? TERIYAKI? WHERE'S YOUR LAND-A'-MAKE-BELIEVE BUDDY?
GUESS YOUR MOM CAN ADD "MENTAL" TO YOUR LIST'A PROBLEMS, HUH, PUNK?
HE WAS-- HE WAS RIGHT THERE! T-TEKAGI...

SEVEN BLOCKS FROM THE DEVLIN SHELTER
THREE MINUTES, 37 SECONDS PAST MIDNIGHT
GIVE IT UP!
YOU DIN'T GET ANCHOVIES, DIDJA? I HATE THEM LITTLE FISH!
THIS GUY I KNOW? GOT A PIE ONE TIME? TOOK A BITE-- FISH STARTED FLAPPIN' FLIPPERS IN HIS MOUTH!
DON'T PUSH, MAN! THERE'S ENOUGH FOR EVERYBODY!
NOT IF YOU GET YOUR PAWS IN FIRST, GUT-MAN!
RUNNIN' THAT HOLE OF A SHELTER, TAKIN' WHAT WE WANT, WHEN WE WANTED... WE'VE HAD IT SWEET, GUYS, Y'KNOW?
I COULD KILL NOVA, THAT MOTHERLESS P ECE 'A--
THAT IS NOT YOUR PRIVILEGE.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN CRUEL TO THE BOY.
WHO--? OH, MAX WASN'T SO MENTAL! HE DID HAVE A FRIEND!
ANY OTHER ADVICE BEFORE I SMASH YOUR TEETH DOWN YOUR THROAT?

NEVER MISTREAT A CHILD. A SINGLE BAD INFLUENCE CAN HAVE... TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES.
THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT HE'LL GROW UP TO BECOME--!
THEY BLEED OUT FROM POOLS OF DARKNESS.
GENKOTSU. DOKA. OSAKU. ENTEKI. FERUZE.
TORTURER. ARSONIST. THIEF. ARCHER. SADIST.
ALL THE MURDEROUS VARIETIES OF SNAKEROOT.
W-WHAT ARE THEY?
THEY'RE ALL OVER-- COMIN' OUTTA THE WALLS!
COME ON! LET'S--!
J-JUST 'POLOGIZE TO THE MAN, JED! WHATEVER YOU GOT IN HIS FACE OVER--TELL HIM YOU'RE SORRY!
"SORRY" WON'T HELP.
YOU CAN TRY BEGGING, IF YOU LIKE.

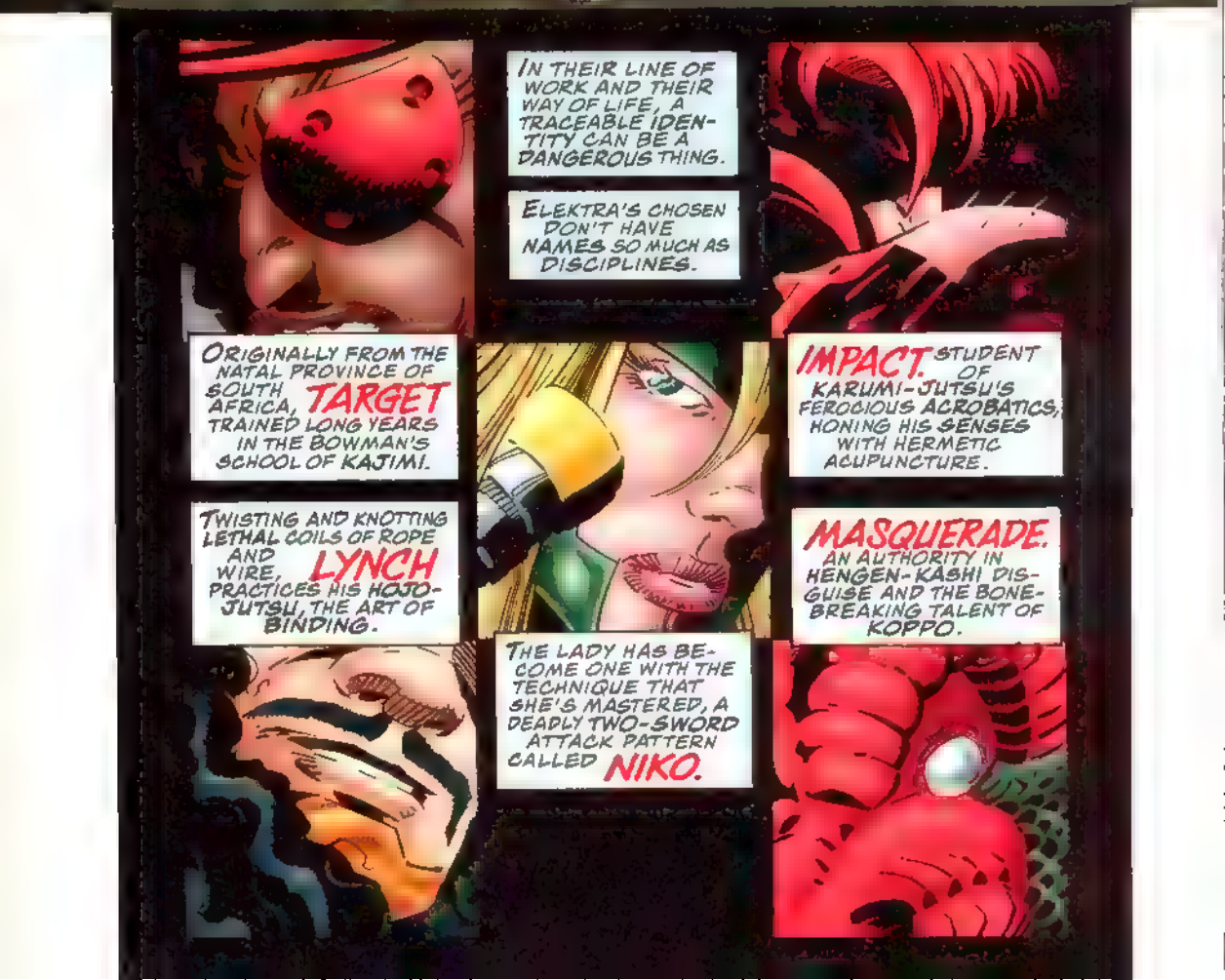
THAT WON'T SAVE YOU, EITHER
BUT I DO LIKE THE WAY IT SOUNDS...
12:05 A.M
PIZZA
SPLIT
ONE MINUTE, 23 SECONDS OF CARNAGE LATER.
MMM... SAUSAGE!
SPLIT

"Every human being has four hungers: the hunger of the loins, the hunger of the belly, the hunger of the mind, the hunger of the soul."
-James Webb, 1964


You are nineteen years old.
Slivers of rock dig into your fingertips.
Splitting nail, tearing flesh.
There's a gash on your thigh an inch wide and three times as long.
Each time you move your leg, a ridge of frozen blood shatters into red crystals smelling of copper.
Outside wounds can't compete with the hurt that rends from within.
No daughter ever loved her father like you did
Like you still do.
But love wasn't enough to save him from a kidnapping gone hellishly wrong
Love wasn't enough to keep you together with Matt.
A bitter tide of grief pulled you away.
Misery threatens to pull you under.
And to escape the roiling gray that rises from below, you climb.
The Sennin will help you regain your focus.
The wise men of this peak who trained you as a child.
The wonderful, mystic--

WIPE THAT STUPID SMILE OFF YOUR FACE!
STILL THE SAME, AIN'TCHA, ELEKTRA? THINKIN' IT'S ALL GONNA COME YOUR WAY 'CAUSE YOU'RE DADDY'S LITTLE RICH GIRL!
I--I'VE COME HERE FOR HELP, STICK! THERE'S SOMETHING--DREADFUL--INSIDE ME! I HAVE TO GET IT UNDER CONTROL!
TRY AND TURN ME BACK, AND I CAN'T BE RESPONSIBLE FOR--
DO IT--GUT ME WITH THAT SAI YOU GOT HID IN YOUR COAT
TAKE A PIECE'A SNOW--MAKE IT HARD AND SHARP LIKE WE TALGHT--USE IT TO RIP MY THROAT OUT
OOOH... I'M SCARED JUST TALKIN' 'BOUT IT!
I WANT--I NEED TO COME BACK, HANSHI I'VE NOTHING ELSE LEFT...
YOU GOT BIG BRASS ONES, KUNOICH., THINK'N' WE'D TAKE YOU IN!
YOU FAILED US WHEN YOU WERE TWELVE, GIRL... AND YOU'RE STILL A FAILURE.
BUT I WON'T SEND YOU AWAY EMPTY-HANDED BIT'A FRIENDLY ADVICE TO KEEP YOU WARM ON YOUR WAY BACK DOWN.
COME AROUND HERE AGAIN, SNOT-NOSE, AND WE WILL KILL YOU.

NEW YORK CITY, TONIGHT.
A ROOFTOP DOJO MAINTAINED BY THE NATCHIOS' ESTATE.
YOU'VE ALL TRAVELED THE RIGHT CIRCLES... OR THE WRONG ONES.
YOU'VE ALL HEARD OF THE CHASTE.
THEY CALL THEMSELVES "CRUSADERS FOR DECENCY."
TRUTH IS, THEY'RE TIRED OLD MEN, SITTING UP ON THEIR MOUNTAIN...
...HOPING COLD WILL SLOW THE DECAY THAT'S EATING INTO THEIR OUTDATED BONES.


IN THEIR LINE OF WORK AND THEIR WAY OF LIFE, A TRACEABLE IDENTITY CAN BE A DANGEROUS THING.
ELEKTRA'S CHOSEN DON'T HAVE NAMES SO MUCH AS DISCIPLINES.
ORIGINALLY FROM THE NATAL PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA, TARGET TRAINED LONG YEARS IN THE BOWMAN'S SCHOOL OF KAJIMI.
IMPACT. STUDENT OF KARUMI-JUTSU'S FEROCIOUS ACROBATICS, HONING HIS SENSES WITH HERMETIC ACUPUNCTURE.
TWISTING AND KNOTTING LETHAL COILS OF ROPE AND WIRE, LYNCH PRACTICES HIS HOJO-JUTSU, THE ART OF BINDING.
MASQUERADE. AN AUTHORITY IN HENGEN-KASHI DISGUISE AND THE BONE-BREAKING TALENT OF KOPPO.
THE LADY HAS BECOME ONE WITH THE TECHNIQUE THAT SHE'S MASTERED, A DEADLY TWO-SWORD ATTACK PATTERN CALLED NIKO.

TOGETHER WITH SALVO, THEY ARE A FIERCE ARMY OF STEALTH.

THE CHASTE WAIT UNTIL A MENACE HAS VICTORY IN ITS GRASP BEFORE THOSE OLD MEN MAKE THEIR MOVE!

WHATEVER EDGE THEY ONCE HAD IS LONG GONE!

OUR ADVANTAGE WILL BE IN ATTACKING THREATS AHEAD OF TIME-- STRIKING FAST, STRIKING FIRST!

MY REWARD-- OUR REWARD-- WILL BE AIMING OUR DARKER IMPULSES TOWARD MORE... AFFIRMATIVE... GOALS.

THE SNAKEROOT PLAN A RITUAL PURIFICATION OF THEIR CLAN'S TOTEM-- THE SWORD THEY CALL SAKKI.

WASHING IT CLEAN WILL ONLY ENCOURAGE THE SNAKEROOT'S ALREADY INFLATED BAD ATTITUDES!

ST. GEORGE SHELTER

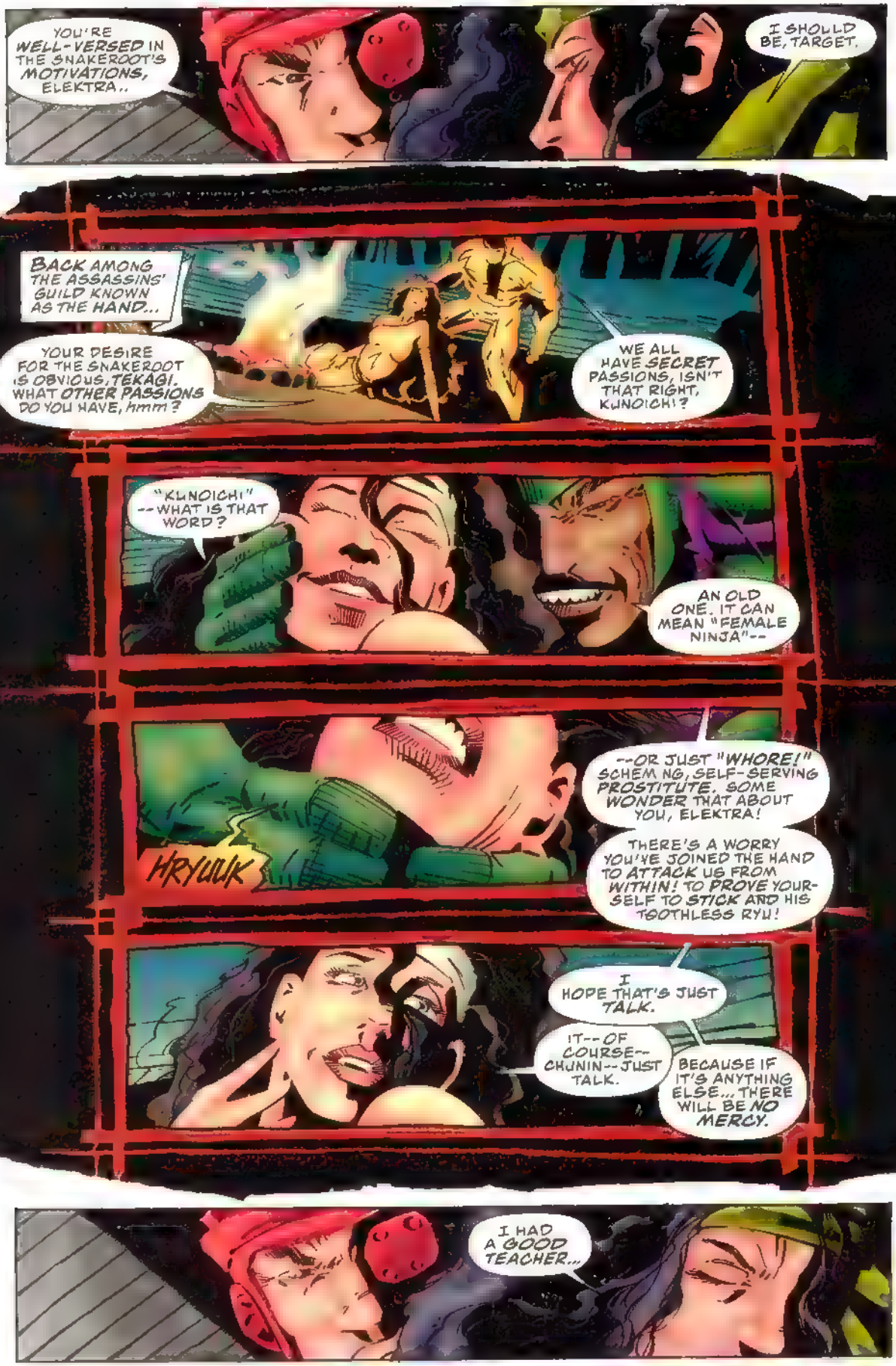
PASS THESE AROUND -- LEARN THEIR TARGETS

FATHER PETER NOVA, A PRIEST WORKING THE INNER CITY.

THE NAVAJO ACTIVIST, SINGER TSILKALI.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER, DOCTOR AARON SOKOTO, OF ARADENNI.

TO HONORED


YOU'RE WELL-VERSED IN THE SNAKEROOT'S MOTIVATIONS, ELEKTRA..
I SHOULD BE, TARGET.
BACK AMONG THE ASSASSINS' GUILD KNOWN AS THE HAND...
YOUR DESIRE FOR THE SNAKEROOT IS OBVIOUS, TEKAGI. WHAT OTHER PASSIONS DO YOU HAVE, hmm?
WE ALL HAVE SECRET PASSIONS, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, KUNOICHI?
"KUNOICHI" --WHAT IS THAT WORD?
AN OLD ONE. IT CAN MEAN "FEMALE NINJA"--
--OR JUST "WHORE!" SCHEMING, SELF-SERVING PROSTITUTE. SOME WONDER THAT ABOUT YOU, ELEKTRA!
HRYUUK
THERE'S A WORRY YOU'VE JOINED THE HAND TO ATTACK US FROM WITHIN! TO PROVE YOURSELF TO STICK AND HIS TOOTHLESS RYU!
I HOPE THAT'S JUST TALK.
IT-- OF COURSE-- CHUNIN-- JUST TALK.
BECAUSE IF IT'S ANYTHING ELSE... THERE WILL BE NO MERCY.
I HAD A GOOD TEACHER...

ST GEORGE, THE DEVLIN SHELTER
--TALKING WITH FATHER PETER NOVA, WHOSE INITIATIVES TO CLEAN UP THE SHELTER SYSTEM HAVE SPARKED DEBATE--
THAT'S--THAT'S TRUE, WE'VE HAD SOME RESISTANCE FROM CITY OFFICIALS WHO-- BUT I'D RATHER TALK ABOUT HELPING--
CONTROVERSY SELLS, PADRE!
PETER, WHERE ARE YOU GO NG? THIS KIND OF ATTENTION CAN HELP YOUR CAUSE GET NOTICED!
I'M NOT LOOKING FOR RATINGS, MADELINE...
...I WANT TO SEE RESULTS!
STRAIGHTEN OUT THE LINE BACK THERE-- KEEP EVERYBODY MOVING!
PLENTY OF HUNGRY FOLKS TO FEED!
LET'S QUIET THAT GRUMBLE IN YOUR STOMACH, JONNY!
SEE YOU AT OUR JOB SEMINAR FIRST THING TOMORROW, RIGHT? POINT YOU IN THE DIRECTION OF SOME CHANCES FOR WORK!
I'M THERE, FATHER PETE! SAY...YOU GOT ANY OATMEAL BREAD?
IN THE OLD, OLD DAYS-- AROUND ABOUT THE YEAR 102!--NINJA WOULD TRAVEL UNDERCOVER AS YAMABUSHI.

UBIQUITOUS MONKS WANDERING THE MOUNTAIN PATHS OF FEUDAL JAPAN.
NOWADAYS IT'S EVEN EASIER TO BLEND TO POSE AS A FACELESS EVERYMAN MOST WOULD RATHER AVOID THAN ACKNOWLEDGE.
IMPACT A HANDICAPPED BEGGAR. SALVO A MUNDANE JANITOR.
COME AN' GET YOURS!
NIKO, MASQUERADE AND LYNCH SLIP BENEATH THE WRETCHED BLANKET THAT COVERS THE HOMELESS.
COME AN' GET YOURS!
TARGET DONS A MAINTENANCE UNIFORM AND TAKES THE HIGH GROUND.
ALL EYES ON WATCH FOR THE ENEMY.
COME AN' GET--

MINE.
DON'T MIND IF I DO.
HELLO AGAIN, KUNOICHI!
SAVE ANY TASTY TREATS FOR YOUR OLD CHUNIN?
TEKAGI!
THE SNAKEROOT DON'T SO MUCH APPEAR FROM HIDING.
THEY EXPLODE!
YOU'LL TASTE STEEL TONIGHT, SNAKEROOT!
FKOOM
I LIKE MINE WELL-DONE, LIL' LADY... mm-mmmm!
GYIAAR

WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU, TEKAGI!
KRAANG!
DID YOUR TIME IN THE HAND TEACH YOU NOTHING OF WORTH, ELEKTRA? WAS I THAT POOR AN INSTRUCTOR?
"PREY" WAITS-- IN HIDING AND IN DISMAY! THE PREDATOR, THOUGH, HAS NO HESITATION!
AND NO MERCY.
YOUR PATHETIC EXCUSE FOR AN ORDER WAS OUTCLASSED FROM THE START, GIRL...
THIS IS-- MADNESS! IT'S JUST CRAZY IT'S--
AROOO AROOO!
--GOTTA GET PEOPLE OUT GET THEM SAFE--
GRAB SOMEONE WHO CAN'T MAKE IT AND HELP OUT! MOVE!
THE FIRE ALARM CAN'T POSSIBLY ADD MORE TO THE PANIC.
BUT IT CAN HELP DIRECT THE HYSTERIA TOWARD THE EXITS.
AROOO-AROOO-AROOO!

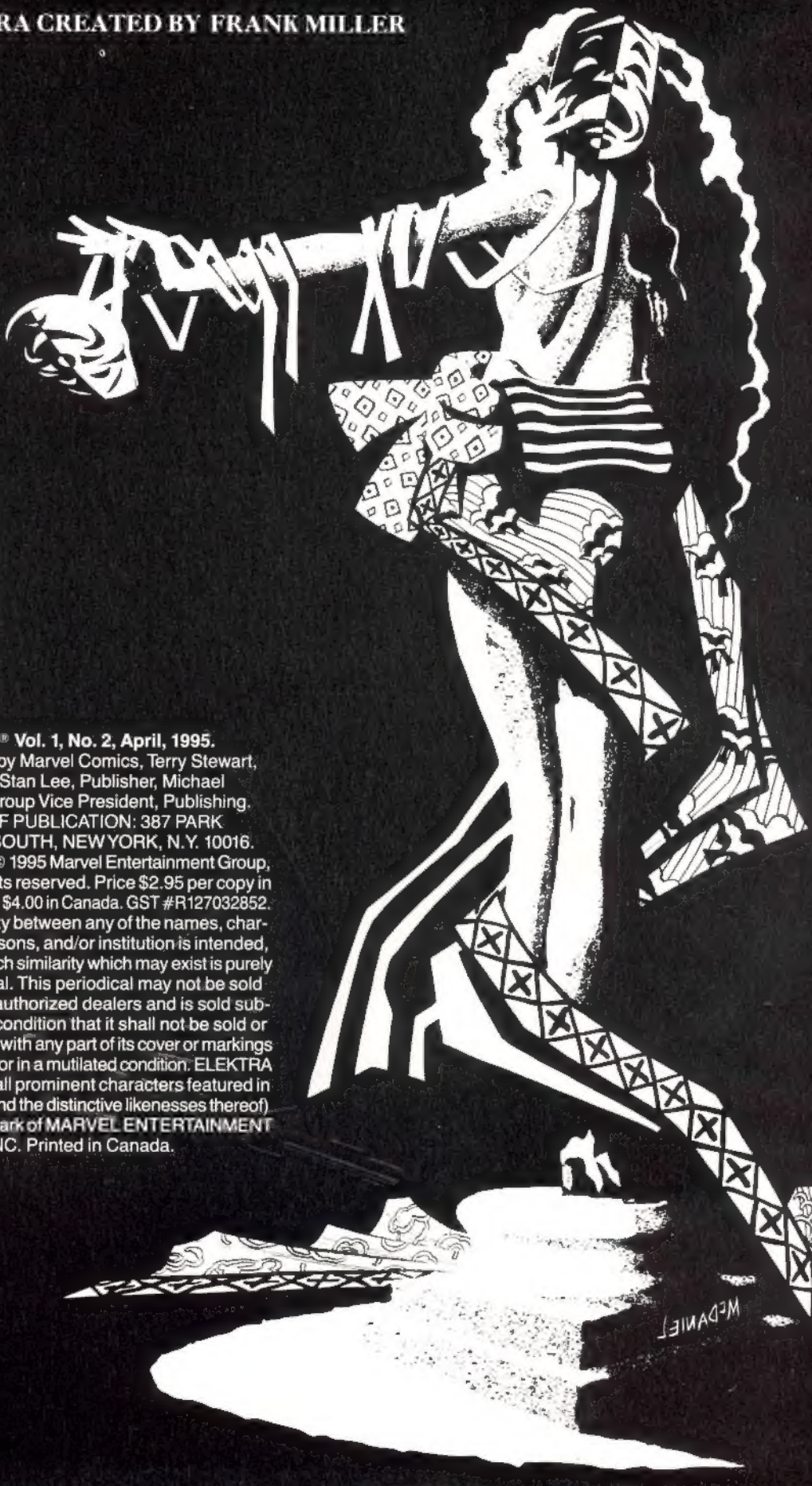
GOT A LAST REQUEST, GENIN?
KLTAANG!
YOUR JAW.
IN 12 PIECES.
SPARE ME YOJR LESSONS IN THE ART OF WAR, TEKAGI!
WOULD YOU PREFER MY DISCOURSE ON ROMANCE? TIME WAS, WE HAD MORE THAN WEAPONS BETWEEN US!
OR WAS THAT LESS?

THE MOMENTS ARE BOTH DISTINCT AND SAVAGE.
TARGET'S VOLLEY OF SLAUGHTER.
SKR-AASH!
THE MOIST RATTLE OF FERUZE'S CHAIN CRUSHING THE ARCHER'S LARYNX.
BRAKOOM! BRAKOOM!
HYIEE!
SALVO'S GUNFIRE SIZZLING INTO THE RELENTLESS GENKOTSU.
SKLAANT!
LET DOWN YOUR GUARD, NATCHIOS! I PROMISE TO MAKE IT QUICK AND PAINLESS!
NO! I NEED THE PAIN-- TO KEEP STRONG-- TO KEEP CONTROL!

IS THAT THE REASON FOR THIS YOU GAVE THE REST OF YOUR FUNERAL PARTY? LIE TO THEM, WOMAN-- BUT NOT TO ME!
THIS ISN'T ABOUT KEEPING SOME "DARKER IMPULSE" IN CHECK -- IT'S ABOUT FEAR! FEAR THAT YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN ORDINARY!
YOU WANT TO BE EXCEPTIONAL, ELEKTRA? TAKE THIS SWORD--TAKE UP WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SNAKE-ROOT!
COME-- COME WITH ME.
I-- WHAT IS THIS ABOUT? I'M NOT GOING ANY--
IT WASN'T A SUGGESTION.
TAKE THE HOLY MAN, LOVER. HAVE HIM SAY A PRAYER FOR BOTH OF YOU.
HELL, HAVE HIM SAY A PRAYER FOR ME.
LET THE HUNT BEGIN...

ELEKTRA
NEXT : HOUR OF THE WOLF

ELEKTRA CREATED BY FRANK MILLER



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